MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **1300 West Park Street** Historic Address (if applicable): **None** City/Town: **Butte, MT**	Site Number: **24 SB 1042** (An historic district number may also apply.) County: **Silverbow**
Historic Name: **Petroleum Building** Original Owner(s): **State of Montana** Current Ownership ☐ Private **X** Public Current Property Name: **Petroleum Building** Owner(s): **Montana Tech, The University of Montana** Owner Address: **1300 West Park Street Butte, MT** Phone:	Legal Location PM: **Montana** Township: **3N** Range: **8W** **SW** ¼ **SW** ¼ **NE** ¼ of Section: **14** Lot(s): **Unavailable** Block(s): **Unavailable** Addition: **School of Mines Addition** Year of Addition: **1913** USGS Quad Name: **Butte North** Year: **1994**
Historic Use: **Education building** Current Use: **Education building** Construction Date: **1953/1957** ☐ Estimated **X** Actual **X** Original Location ☐ Moved Date Moved:	UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov/topofinder2 ☐ NAD 27 **X** NAD 83 (**preferred**) Zone: **12** Easting: **379396** Northing: **5096508**
National Register of Historic Places NRHP Listing Date: Historic District: NRHP Eligible: **X** Yes ☐ No	Date of this document: **June 2, 2010** Form Prepared by: **Diana J. Painter, PhD** Address: **3518 N. C Street, Spokane, WA 99205** Daytime Phone: **(707) 364-0697**
MT SHPO USE ONLY Eligible for NRHP: **X** yes □ no Criteria: □ A □ B **X** C □ D Date: 11/18/2010 Evaluator: John Boughton	Comments:

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION **X** See Additional Information Page

Architectural Style: **Stripped Classical** If Other, specify: **aka PWA Moderne**
Property Type: **Institutional** Specific Property Type: **Education building**

Architect: **J. G. Link & Co.** Architectural Firm/City/State: **J. G. Link & Co., Butte, MT**
Builder/Contractor: Company/City/State:
Source of Information: **Newspaper**

The Petroleum Building at Montana Tech is a two-story building with a basement, a largely rectangular footprint and gable-on-hip roof. It is a brick masonry building (brick on masonry, according to the State of Montana Building Detail Report), a concrete foundation, and a built-up roof. It was designed by the J. G. Link & Co. architecture firm, and constructed in 1953, with modifications in 1957. *(Montana Architectural Drawings - Montana State University Digital Initiatives).*

Location and setting. The Petroleum Building is located on the west side of the Montana Tech campus and is the second building on the right side as one enters the campus from W. Park Street. It is one of five buildings that define the main quad on the campus. The quad is a formal, rectilinear space, whereas the first part of the campus developed as an outer 'ring' looking out over Butte. Today these two spatial models are combined in the original main campus.

The campus itself is directly west of downtown Butte and linked to it by W. Park Street, the main street that accesses and travels through the campus. The entry to this original portion of the campus is on the north side of W. Park Street. The quad is perpendicular to W. Park Street and the Petroleum Building faces east onto the quad.

Materials. The Petroleum Building is brick on masonry, according to the Building Detail Report (it actually appears to be brick masonry construction), with a concrete foundation and a built-up roof. The brick has a combed finish and is richly colored in shades of terra cotta, green and brown. The terra cotta tiles at the entry have a mottled finish in shades of pale green. They have smooth and striated textures and appear in various sizes and configurations to emphasize the design features, particularly the contrasting vertical and horizontal lines, of the building. The aluminum frames of the windows, which are new, are pale green. The windows also have a slight green tint. Additional materials include concrete and what appears to be a copper fascia on the canopies of the rear entries. The variety of textures and colors in the terra cotta and brick contribute to the richness of the surfaces on this building.

Massing and design. The Petroleum Building has a largely rectangular footprint; a shallow projecting bay is centrally located on the west, rear façade. It is a two-story building, but because of the steep slope on which is it built, the rear of the building appears as a three-story building. It has a gable-on-hip roof that is set within what was originally a flat roof with a short parapet (the building was originally to have been three stories, and this hip roof was added later). The building is clad in brick but for the entry bays, which are clad in terra cotta. Details are as follows :

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

East façade. The east entry façade of the building faces the interior of the Montana Tech campus. It is characterized by a large entry bay (it may appear overly large because the building was originally intended to have another story) that is clad in terra cotta, in contrast to the brick of the main building. At the lower level is a recessed, three-bay entry. The center bay here contains the entry, which is made up of two doors of full-height glass with anodized aluminum frames and two-light sidelights, surmounted by a three-light transom window. The bays to each side of this entry ensemble have a large, one-over-two-light window, with a fixed light above and operable windows below. This entry bay is accessed via a shallow ramp in the center, with tubular metal rails, and two concrete steps to each side. Above the entry bays the name of the building, "Petroleum Building," is spelled out in free-standing letters in a typeface that is characteristic of the period.

Above the entry, at the second level, are six regularly spaced, one-over-one-light windows, also enframed in terra cotta. These windows have a large fixed light above and smaller operable light below. To each side of this central feature is a one-over-two-light window of the same design as those flanking the entry!

To each side of the central bays are three additional bays at both the upper and lower levels. The windows here are all of the same design. They consist of two large fixed lights over three smaller lights, the two lights toward the 'inside' being operable. The windows, which are horizontally oriented, are separated by broad concrete mullions. Below the window sills, which are covered with aluminum (apparently a new feature), is a brick dentil-like course that continues the full width of all three window bays, emphasizing the horizontal lines of the building. The building parapet is finished with narrow metal coping. The concrete of the plaza extends to the base of the building on the left side, where it terminates against the base of the building in a small, raised planter. On the right hand side of the building a lawn extends to the base of the building.

South facade. The south façade of the building is solid brick with no openings. The ground slopes steeply from the upper to the lower campus here. There is a concrete drainage ditch adjacent to the building in this location. Next to the ditch is a narrow landscape feature with volcanic rock, and then a concrete stair with sixteen steps and a decorative metal rails that extends from the upper to the lower campus.

West façade. The west, rear façade of the building has a shallow projecting bay in the center. There are two window bays here. Each window consists of three fixed lights above and six fixed-and-operable lights below. The windows are separated by broad concrete mullions and are the same on all three floors. Below the window sills, which are covered with aluminum, is a brick dentil-like course that continues the full width of all three window bays, emphasizing the horizontal lines of the building.

To each side of this central bay, at the ground level, is an entry to the building. The entries consist of a single flush metal door with a small light, accessed via one concrete step. The entry is covered by a flat canopy supported by a double metal post set on a Short, brick-clad pier with a tall concrete coping. The roof canopies have a deep fascia that appears to be finished in copper. Above the entries, lighting a stair tower, are five vertically-oriented fixed windows. To each side of the stair towers are three bays. The south side has windows at the second and third levels (first and second floors). The north side has windows at all three levels. All windows consist of two large lights over three smaller lights. The area in front of the south side of the building is planted in lawn and has a slightly higher grade than elsewhere on this façade. At the center and north side of this façade the parking lot and a curb is very close to the building base.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

North façade. On the north side of the building is a secondary entry on the east side, located above the lower grade, and accessing the basement level. It has a flush metal door. To its right are a one-over-one-light window and two two-over-two-light windows. At about the center of this façade is a shallow pilaster that raises the full height of the building. There are otherwise no openings on this façade. A concrete retaining wall is perpendicular to the building face at the lower level close to the front of the building.

Changes over time. The building's hip roof was added later, likely in the 1957 remodel, although a 1952 rendering shows that it was planned at that time. The entry has been reconfigured to address ADA guidelines. The windows and window frames have been replaced within the same openings. Historical photographs show that the large windows on the front façade originally consisted of one wide light or panel over two smaller lights, vs. the two-over-three-lights seen on the building today. No other changes are known to have taken place. The setting has been altered by the construction of the adjacent Student Union Building, but it is likely that the completion of the quad with two new buildings on the west side was planned from the beginning.

Architectural context. The Petroleum Building is designed in the "stripped classical" style, a style associated with the Depression era but also popular well into the 1950s. This style, also seen as "PWA Moderne," displays the symmetry characteristic of classicism, but is generally restrained in its expression. Pilasters are common, rather than free-standing columns and architectural features are often expressed in bas relief, similar to detailing popular in the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles. Reflecting a general economy in materials and expression, emphasis is often placed on the front entry design and details.

Historian Cyril Harris defines PWA Moderne as follows: "Architecture that combined elements of Art Deco and Streamline Moderne with elements of the Beaux-Arts style; employed in the design of many large public buildings, civic centers, theaters, and other buildings constructed between 1933 and 1944 by the Public Works Administration (PWA), an agency of the federal government set up to provide jobs during the Great Depression" *(Harris, 1998)*. As noted by historian David Gebhard, "These buildings were fundamentally classical and formal, with just enough Moderne detailing injected to convey a contemporary feeling as well as the traditional authority of the Classical" *(Gebhard, 1985)*. He describes the character-defining features of the style as follows:

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

- Basic classical balanced and symmetrical form; classical horizontal proportions
- Piers used rather than columns; piers occasionally fluted, but generally had no capitals or bases
- Windows arranged as vertical, recessed panels
- Surfaces smooth and flat; terra cotta used for ornament
- Most examples sheathed in smooth stone; polished marble, granite, and terrazzo used both within and without
- Use of relief sculpture and interior murals *(Gebhard, 1985)*.

The Petroleum Building is characteristic of the style in its symmetry, its simple detailing, and its use of terra cotta. It is a thoroughly modern building, in that it relies on natural materials, color and texture to embellish the building, rather than elaborate architectural detailing. It is an excellent example of an early modern building style expressed in an educational structure.

Petroleum Building in 1956, before roof addition

Property Name: **Petroleum Building** Site Number: **24 SB 1042**

HISTORY OF PROPERTY **X** See Additional Information Page

Montana Tech University. The Montana State School of the Mines was founded in 1893. Funding to establish a state school of the mines had been appropriated by President Grover Cleveland when Montana was admitted to the Union in 1889. It finally opened in 1900, with twenty-one students. The purpose of the school was to train students in mining engineering. To that end, it offered two degrees leading to the professions of mining engineer or electrical engineer. During World War II the school became a naval college, with about 90 percent of its facilities devoted to officer training for the U.S. Navy and Marines for a period of two years.

After the war the curriculum was broadened; humanities and social sciences courses were added to what had been up until then a technically-based curriculum. In 1957, about the time the Petroleum Building was finally completed, the school had 303 students. The name of the school was changed from Montana School of Mines to Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology on January 25, 1965. Enrollment had increased to 998 students by 1971. The Montana University System was restructured in 1994 and the name of the university was changed again to its present name of Montana Tech of The University of Montana. Today it houses three colleges, one school, and the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology and has an enrollment of 2100 students *("About Montana Tech – History," http://www.mtech.edu/about.html)*.

INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY **X** See Additional Information Page

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HISTORY OF PROPERTY

History of the building. Funds were appropriated to build the Petroleum Building through the five Million dollar bond approved by the voters of Montana in 1948 *("Officials of Six University Units . . ." 1950)*. It was estimated to cost $200,000 in 1952, and was planned to contain classrooms and laboratories for the petroleum engineering division and physics department, as well as an electrical machinery laboratory *("Architect's Drawing," 1952)*. A three-story building with a basement was planned, with the assumption that the third story would be added later. The first phase was completed in 1953. The second floor was renovated and an addition constructed in 1957 (likely the roof), but a third story was never added. The building was dedicated with a speech by Governor J. Hugo Aronson in October 1953. Plans for the building renovation and addition were approved on October 1957.

Today the building accommodates classrooms, offices, storage rooms, a computer lab, a multimedia lecture hall, and offices for the Petroleum Engineering Department faculty. It also has a Technical Outreach department. According to the university's profile of the building it was originally built with a three-story well that extended from the basement to the ceiling of the top floor so students could "study fluid flow under actual oil well conditions." This was later removed *("About Montana Tech," http://www.mtech.edu/about.html)*. Future plans call for the building to be occupied by the Applied Health Science department.

Architect John G. Link and J. G. Link & Co. John Gustav Link (1870-1954) was born in Bavaria, Germany and received his training at the Royal Academy of Landau before immigrating to the United States in 1887 at the age of 17 and settling in Denver. There he worked for Frank H. Kidder (1887-1890), who authored *The Architect's Handbook,* and architect William Fisher (1890-1893) *(Allison, 2007)*.

Link won a national competition at the age of 22 for the design of the Minnesota State Capital. Hoping to capitalize on this experience, he moved to Montana in 1896 and settled in Butte, where he first formed a partnership with W. E. Donovan, under the name of Link & Donovan (1896-1900), and then with Joseph T. Carter (1900-1905).

In 1906 he formed a partnership with Charles S. Haire. Haire was from Ohio and received his early training in Cincinnati. He moved to Pocatello, Idaho in 1885 and worked for the Union Pacific Railway as a draftsman. He subsequently went to Butte and worked for the Great Northern Railroad in a similar position *(Withey, 1970)*. About 1888 Haire moved to Helena, where he was employed by the real estate and construction firm Wallace and Thornburg (1889-1891). He opened his own firm in 1891, which was involved in the design of institutions throughout the state. In Billings he was particularly known for the design of the 1901 Romanesque Revival Parmly Library and the first St. Vincent's Hospital, as well as many residences *(Brownell, 2010)*.

Based on the strength of his earlier award, Link was commissioned by Montana State Architect Paulson to design the expansion of the Montana State Capital in Helena *("Pioneer Billings Architect Dies," 1954)*. This work was undertaken by Link & Haire in association with New York architect Frank M. Andrews and constructed from 1909 to 1912 *("Helena: Standing Up for Montana")* It was one of their most important early commissions.

HISTORY OF PROPERTY

One of Link's first trips to Montana had been in 1890, when he undertook the building of the Billings Brewery Building in that city *("Pioneer Billings Architect Dies," 1954)*. He settled there permanently in 1906, but maintained an office in Butte throughout his career. In addition to Billings, Butte and Helena, Link & Haire maintained offices in Bozeman, Missoula, and Lewistown at various times during their association *(Brownell, 2010)*.

Link and Haire were considered the leading architects in the state in their 20 years of practice together. They designed 'thousands of buildings statewide, both public and private, including 18 of the 56 county courthouses" *(Brownell, 2010)*. Among their commissions were the Algeria Temple, the Scottish Rite Temple, and the Classical Revival Montana Life Insurance Building in Helena. In Billings they designed the Great Northern Hotel, the Stapleton Building, the Electric Building, the Hart-Albin Building, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, and the second St. Vincent's Hospital *(Brownell, 2010)*.

In Butte they designed The Silver Bow Club, the Silver Bow County Courthouse and the Silver Bow County Jail, the 1922 Masonic Lodge (with W. Wellington Smith), and the State Savings Bank (with George Carsley), among other buildings. They were also responsible for hospitals in Boulder, Billings, and Missoula, and buildings for the Montana State Universities in Missoula and Bozeman. Clients included the Yellowstone Park Hotel Company and the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company. They additionally designed over 100 schools, 50 churches, and 50 office buildings throughout Montana and the western states *(The Montana Historical Society, 2004)*.

Link & Haire continued their partnership until Haire's death in 1925. J. G. Link left the firm in 1926 and was involved through the 1920s in lawsuits with Haire's estate over the firm's profits *("Stacks of Public Records Offered in Architect Case," 1929)*. E. G. Benson, a former employee of Link & Haire, and Haire's son Thomas carried on that firm under the name of Haire and Benson, Architects. Link practiced under his own name until the late 1930s, when the firm became known as J. G. Link & Co.

Link married Martha Welling in St. Louis on September 17, 1895, whom he had met when he lived there briefly *("Local Couple Notes 50th Anniversary," 1945)*. The Links, who moved to Billings in 1906, had one daughter and six sons *(US Census, 1920)*. Elmer Link (born ca 1913) would later become a partner in his father's firm and John Gustav Link Jr. (born ca 1909) would also be trained in his father's firm (a son Frederick would die before his father). In 1920 the Links were living at 105 Yellowstone Avenue. Shortly thereafter Link moved the 1899 Queen Anne residence of Billings pioneers Kate and David Fratt from its original location at 205 N. 29th and had it reconstructed at 142 Clark Avenue (Link received the house in partial payment for the design of the Fratt Memorial Building at the house' original location). He was to live there for the rest of his life *(Reich, 2009)*.

John G. Link continued to practice under his own name and his firm name of J. G. Link & Co. The firm name of J. G. Link, Inc. is seen in the 1920s through about 1930. He briefly used the name of J. G. Link and Son Co. in the mid-1930s. The name of J. G. Link & Co. began to surface in the late 1930s. In 1947 Link's son Elmer is listed as Secretary of J. G. Link & Co., but he also began to practice under the name of E. F. Link & Associates at this time. Billings architect Harry Loners was a draftsman for J. G. Link & Co. (Loners would work for the firm from 1935 to 1952). J. G. Link & Co. continued in business through the mid-1960s, ten years after the senior John Link's death in 1954 *(Montana Architectural Drawings - Montana State University Digital Initiatives)*.

The name E. F. Link and Associates is also seen from the late 1940s through the mid-1980s. Elmer's son John Gustav Link is listed in the 1952 directory of the American Society of Civil Engineers as a partner in J. G. Link and Co., Architects & Engineers, of Butte (he is also seen as John G. Link III), and he is noted as a managing architect for the firm's projects in the early 1970s.

According to historian Chere Jiusto, Elmer Link is credited with the design of over 80 stores, warehouse and residences in the Billings area *(Jiusto, 1998)*. He was most active, however, in the 1940s through the 1960s, where one of his most noteworthy commissions was for the 1966 GSA-sponsored US Courthouse in Billings.

After John G. Link's death, the firm responsible for further work on the Petroleum Building was J. G. Link & Company, Architects and Engineers, of Butte. If the above records are consistent, after the senior John Link's death, his grandson John Link would be responsible for the second phase of work on the building. This would have to be verified, however, by examining the drawings for the renovation to discern the architect of record.

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Property Name: **Petroleum Building** Site Number: **24 SB 1042**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

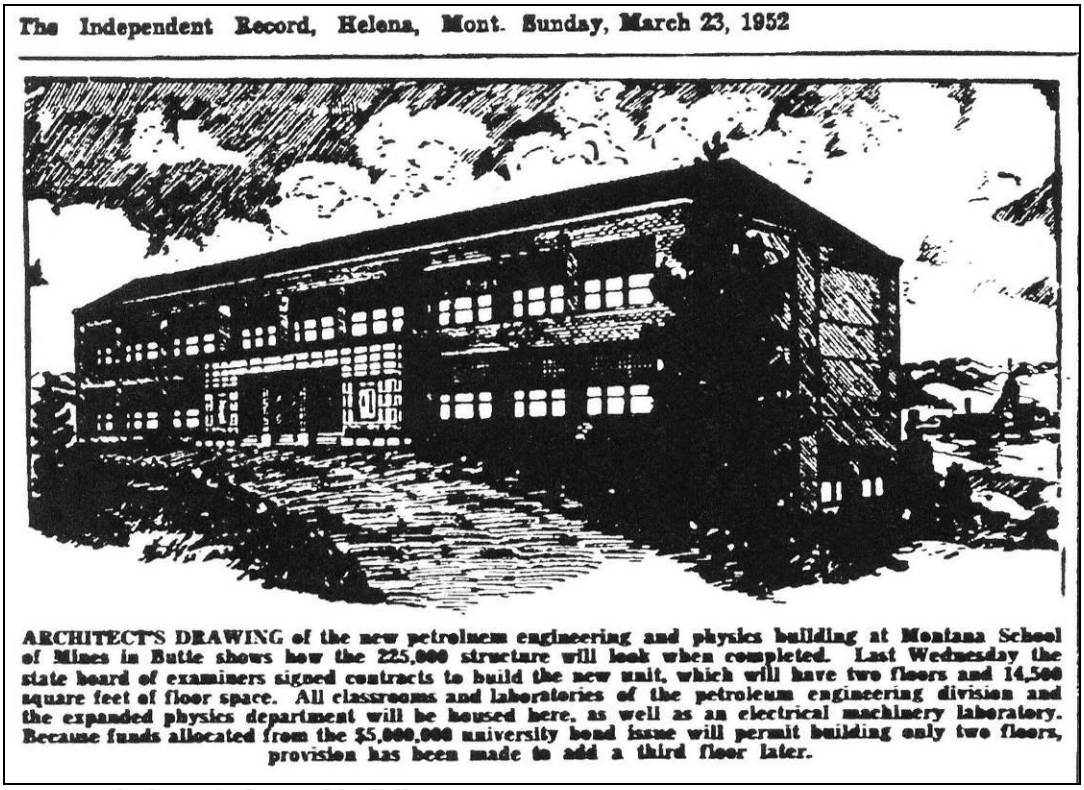
NRHP Listing Date:
NRHP Eligibility: **X** Yes ☐ No **X** Individually ☐ Contributing to Historic District ☐ Noncontributing to Historic District
NRHP Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B **X** C ☐ D
Area of Significance: **Architecture** Period of Significance: **1953-57**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ☐ See Additional Information Page

The Petroleum Building is significant as an excellent example of the Stripped Classical or PWA Moderne style, and for its association with the firm of J. G. Link & Co., one of the premier architecture firms in Montana. The Petroleum Building exemplifies the Stripped Classical style, with its symmetry, contrast of horizontal and vertical elements, subtle detailing, and use of materials. It is a thoroughly modern building in its use of natural materials and colors and textures for decorative effect, and in its overall emphasis on horizontality. The building was designed by the firm of J. G. Link & Co., noted for both its productivity and design quality, from the time that Link associated to Charles Haire until his sons and eventually his grandson took over the firm(s), to continue the company's reputation for design quality through the mid twentieth century.

INTEGRITY ☐ See Additional Information Page

The Petroleum Building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Integrity of design is retained. The planned third story was never added, and changes made in 1957 (the addition of a hip roof) are both within the Period of Significance and had been envisioned earlier. Additional changes include replacement windows with a subtly different design, but within the same openings. Changes have been made at the entry to accommodate ADA access, but these have been sympathetic to the building design. All other associations are intact. Note that the building sign on the front façade is a character-defining feature and should be retained, even if the building use changes.



The Independent Record, Helena, Mont. Sunday, March 23, 1952

ARCHITECT'S DRAWING of the new petroleum engineering and physics building at Montana School of Mines in Butte shows how the 225,000 structure will look when completed. Last Wednesday the state board of examiners signed contracts to build the new unit, which will have two floors and 14,500 square feet of floor space. All classrooms and laboratories of the petroleum engineering division and the expanded physics department will be housed here, as well as an electrical machinery laboratory. Because funds allocated from the $5,000,000 university bond issue will permit building only two floors, provision has been made to add a third floor later.

1952 rendering of planned building

Aerial photo showing the building after construction but before roof addition

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Petroleum Building** Site Number: **24 SB 1042**

Description: **East (front) facade**

Description: **Roof of Petroleum Building, viewed from north**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Petroleum Building** Site Number: **24 SB 1042**

Description: **East façade, entry detail**

Description: **West (rear) facade**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Petroleum Building** Site Number: **24 SB 1042**

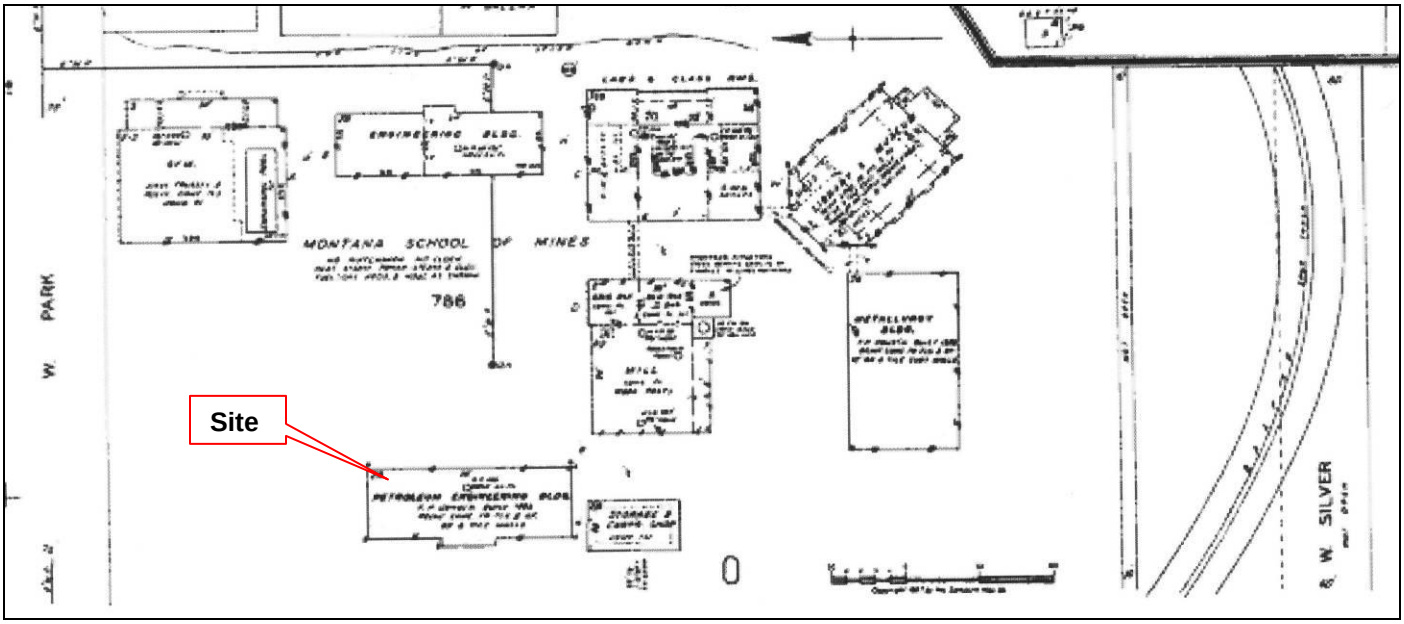
Description: **Stairs along south façade; south facade**

Description: **West façade, rear entry detail**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

SITE MAP

Property Name: **Petroleum Building** Site Number: **24 SB 1042**



State School of Mines in 1957

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Property Name: **Petroleum Building** Site Number: **24 SB 1042**